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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/528,287	03/16/2005	Masamitsu Kitahashi	93928	6612

24628 7590 09/13/2006

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EXAMINER

RACHUBA, MAURINA T

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3723

DATE MAILED: 09/13/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/528,287	Applicant(s) KITAHASHI ET AL.	
	Examiner M Rachuba	Art Unit 3723	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 June 2006.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 5-10 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 8-10 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 5-7 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 March 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>3/16/05, 8/4/06</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 8-9 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in the reply filed on 05 June 2006.
2. Applicant's election with traverse of Group I in the reply filed on 05 June 2006 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that the method and apparatus are so interlinked as to require searches in identical classes. This is not found persuasive because it is the examiner's position that the apparatus claims do not require a pushing force be set, and the method claims do not require that the ring and chuck separately oscillate or rotate. Therefore the search for each invention is different, in that it requires different details be found.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-3, as broadly claimed, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Guthrie et al, 5,975,215. '215 discloses the claimed invention, including the retainer ring and the chuck ***can be*** independently oscillated with a gap of

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fixed range is constantly maintained. It is noted that applicant has not claimed the structure that requires that the gap be maintained, or that the ring and chuck be independently oscillated. '215, figures 4 and 5, and column 7, lines 27 through column 8, lines 2, discloses that the only time the retaining ring contacts the chuck is when the planarizing is done and the wafer is lifted off the polishing pad or cloth, and when the ring wears to the point that the gap cannot be maintained. Further, '215 discloses a polishing pad charged with abrasive slurry. Without further defining limitations, or evidence, the examiner considers that the pad charged with abrasive slurry is an abrasive cloth as broadly claimed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

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7. Claims 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guthrie et al, '215. '215 discloses that a gap is maintained between the retaining ring and the substrate of less than 0.75 mm. It is not clear from the disclosure if that gap is also maintained at that range between the retaining ring and chuck. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have maintained the gap within the claimed range of 0.5 to 2.0 mm, or no more than 0.5 mm, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233. Here, '215 discloses that there is a gap of less than 0.75mm between the substrate and ring, and therefore the gap between the ring and chuck is similar in size.

8. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guthrie et al, '215 in view of Kajiwara et al, 6,540,590. '215 does not disclose that the retaining ring is rotatable with respect to the chuck. '590, in a similar device, column 4, lines 40-45, teaches providing a drive mechanism to rotate the ring with respect to the chuck. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided '215 with the rotatable ring as taught by '590, column 4, lines 30-39, to minimize the impact of any variation in the lower surface of the ring on the rate of material removal from the edge of the substrate.

Conclusion

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Other similar devices are cited of interest.

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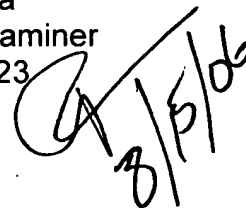
10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to M Rachuba whose telephone number is 571-272-4493.

The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Hail can be reached on 571-272-4485. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

M Rachuba
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3723

Handwritten signature of M. Rachuba and date 3/5/06.